

Unchecked, we have no idea what the statistics will be in 2015 or 2220—less than 20 years from today.

Children suffer inordinately from the cruel AIDS pandemic. Millions are born HIV-infected even though mother-to-child transmission can be easily avoided if adequate training and healthcare is provided. By the end of the decade, 40 million children will be orphaned as a consequence of AIDS. The impact on developing societies—socially, politically, and economically—is incalculable and threatens the stability of the globe.

The pandemic is not limited to Africa, Mr. Speaker. The Caribbean region has the second highest rate of HIV infections in the world—only a few hundred miles from the United States. Russia had the highest increase rate of any country last year. The social upheaval that could arise in Russia as a result of this crisis could have serious consequences for global security. According to the National Intelligence Council, India is on the verge of a catastrophic AIDS epidemic.

For these reasons, the United States must lead the world in the effort to combat and ultimately rid the globe of this modern-day black plague. The problem is monumental, and our response needs to be both bilateral and multilateral. However, as with any problem, financial resources are not the sole answer to a problem, and the generosity of the American people must be well managed. We must provide resources at a pace at which they can be absorbed and used wisely. We must continue to encourage and support faith-based organizations and churches that are doing good works to educate the poor about HIV and AIDS. We must also insist that other developed nations join us in this global effort. The President has already signaled our nation's intention to lead by committing \$200 million for a multilateral effort to combat HIV/AIDS through a global AIDS war chest that will be designed and implemented in the months to come.

To support these efforts, I have introduced legislation today to address both the bilateral and multilateral pillars of our response to the AIDS crisis. The most immediate and important step to address the HIV/AIDS challenge is for the United States to provide the leadership and impetus for a major international effort.

Consequently, my bill authorizes the Agency for International Development to carry out a comprehensive program of HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and treatment at a level of \$469 million in each of the next two fiscal years. This is \$100 million more than has been requested by the Administration for these purposes in Fiscal Year 2001. Moreover, my legislation authorizes an additional \$50 million pilot program to provide treatment for those infected with HIV/AIDS by assisting the public and private sectors of developing countries in the procurement of HIV/AIDS pharmaceuticals and anti-viral therapies. Accordingly, through our bilateral efforts, the United States will demonstrate its commitment to address all facets of the HIV/AIDS challenge and to do so in a responsible and meaningful manner, and thereby challenge, the remainder of the developed world to emulate the example of the United States.

The bill I have introduced today also authorizes the President to contribute to multilateral

efforts to combat HIV/AIDS at a level that the Administration deems appropriate. America will contribute its fair share as we work to leverage additional funds for this crusade from other developing countries. By providing the President with this flexibility, we can ensure that the contributions made by the

The novel bilateral treatment program that my bill authorizes is vitally important, for it gives hope for those already suffering from AIDS. By authorizing a pilot treatment program, we can work to extend the productive lives of those infected by the virus. This is not only the right thing to do—aside from humanitarian concerns—treatment makes prevention work. Without some expectation of hope or care, the poor have no reason to be tested for AIDS or to seek help. I am fully cognizant of the challenge posed by treatment programs in developing countries. However, we have no other option if we are ever to stem the tide of the pandemic.

The bill that I have introduced today also promotes microenterprise development as a crucial component in the struggle against HIV/AIDS. Microenterprise gives the poor who must deal with HIV/AIDS the means to help themselves. I wish to highlight the work in this area by Opportunity International, one of the organizations among my constituency. Opportunity International is a microenterprise pioneer and leader that has helped to create one million jobs for the poor of the developing world over the past thirty years by making loans to small enterprises.

Charles Dokmo, President and Chief Operating Officer of Opportunity International, is an expert in the field of microenterprise development and is working to implement an ambitious plan to combat the spread of AIDS in Africa through education, awareness, and by creating opportunities for those confronting HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to reiterate what I think is a consensus in Congress. Simply stated, the AIDS virus is one of the great moral challenges of our era for it is a scourge of unparalleled proportions in modern times. Every citizen has a stake in what tragically could be the black plague of the 21st century. Accordingly, we should do all we can to meet this test by reaching out now to those most in need—it is the right thing to do for our children, our country, and our world. Let us not fail the challenge.

IT IS TIME TO FINISH WHAT WE
STARTED IN 1964

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this morning the United States Commission on Civil Rights released its report on Florida's election system. To say the least, I am appalled by the Commission's findings. To think that in this day and age we find ourselves trying to justify the racist and prejudicial tendencies that exist in the American election system is both pitiful and disturbing.

From purging the names of eligible voters to increasing numbers of spoiled ballots, the

Commission's report clearly indicates that the problems which occurred in Florida last November disproportionately affected the votes cast by African-Americans and other minority groups. While only making up eleven percent of all eligible voters in Florida, African-Americans cast nearly 55 percent of the ballots that were rejected in Florida. In fact, African-Americans cast nearly 55 percent of the ballots that were rejected in Florida. In fact, African-American voters were nearly ten times more likely than white voters to have their ballots rejected in Florida. Nine of the ten counties with the highest percentage of African-American voters had disqualified ballot percentages above the state average. Of the 100 precincts with the highest numbers of disqualified ballots, 83 of them are majority-black precincts.

African-Americans were also disproportionately purged from voter lists. Under the Motor Voter Law, voters are protected from having their names removed from voting lists unless they move, die, or are convicted of a felony. In Florida, however, it appears as if the Motor Voter Law has been replaced by a system in which the names of eligible voters are unlawfully purged. In Miami-Dade County, the number of African-American names purged from eligible voter lists outnumbered the number of white and Hispanic voters whose names were removed from eligible voting lists three to one.

Moreover, the report's findings that an official of the Florida Division of Elections supported updating voting lists in a manner that removed a disproportionate number of African-Americans from eligible voting lists leaves little question that the State of Florida could have avoided the problems voters faced on election day. The Commission's report makes it clear that both Governor Jeb Bush and Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris were well aware of the potential problems that some of Florida's counties were going to face on election day. However,

Mr. Speaker, the report issued by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights highlights the problems that we face in Florida, and indeed, the rest of the nation. It is disgraceful that America has yet to create an election system that encourages rather than discourages. It is disgraceful that the conversations we are having today on voter accessibility, voter education, purging of eligible voters, and improving voting technology resemble the same conversations we had during the 1960s. Those of us involved in the Civil Rights Movement had hoped that Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 would have ensured that no African-American, or any American for that matter, would be unlawfully turned away from the polls. Unfortunately, the reality is, it will take an Election Reform Act during the 107th Congress to finish what we started in 1964.

HONORING DAVID GROSSBERG

HON. GARY G. MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. GRAY G. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute and honor to the